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RUEHBR/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA PRIORITY 1490
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RUMIAAA/HQ USSOUTHCOM J2 MIAMI FL PRIORITY
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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 03 PORT AU PRINCE 000662

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE
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STATE FOR WHA/EX AND WHA/CAR
S/CRS
SOUTHCOM ALSO FOR POLAD
STATE PASS AID FOR LAC/CAR
INR/IAA (BEN-YEHUDA)
WHA/EX PLEASE PASS USOAS

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [ASEC](#) [KCRM](#) [HA](#)
SUBJECT: DDR PARTICIPANTS PROFILED

REF: 06 PORT AU PRINCE 1881

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¶1. (U) This report is sensitive but unclassified -- please protect accordingly.

¶2. (U) Summary: Part of the focus of the GoH's National Disarmament, Demobilization and Reinsertion Program (CNDDR) is reintegrating gang members into ordinary society. MINUSTAH's DDR section charged the Research and Integrated Social Action Group (GRASI) with assisting in the orientation and reinsertion program. GRASI compiled a report in which they profiled each participant, listing such factors as level of education, family history and size, drug use and psychological condition. The report gives insight into the lives of these young men and also reveals holes in the program itself, such as lack of communication among the interested parties and ineffectiveness of convincing the gang members to denounce their criminal activities. End Summary.

Profile of a Gangster: Geffrard Herold

¶3. (U) Geffrard Herold was born April 4, 1983 in Cite Soleil. His father is a farmer and his mother is dead. He entered school at about 6 years of age and continued to attend through part of high school, where he struggled with mathematics. He left school in 2003 at age 20, citing 'economic problems.' Herold and his 24-year-old girlfriend, who is expecting their first child, occupy a single room in a dilapidated rental home. He joined a gang partly under pressure from his peers and partly because of his economic problems. He has carried an illegal weapon since the age of ten. He says he uses the weapon to 'make war' against the police and MINUSTAH and to carry out kidnappings and extortion. He made approximately USD 2,700 per month before joining DDR. However, he hasn't saved any money because he 'needed to enjoy life.'

¶4. (U) Herold wants to become a chauffeur and thinks that with his numerous contacts, it's a career that will allow him to earn a living. He came to DDR's Orientation and Reinsertion Center (ROC) at the behest of the leader of his

gang. He said he wants to change his way of life because he doesn't feel safe in his gang but doesn't trust the police. His girlfriend, who attends university, is also pressuring him to change his life. A psychological profile of Herold concluded that he is prone to delinquency and heavily influenced by the sub-culture of violence in his neighborhood. He is in denial about his offenses and blocks out thoughts that he has done wrong. He needs ongoing psycho-social counseling.

The Orientation Program

15. (U) Harold is just one of 53 members of Santo IV, the fourth class to enter the ROC as part of the GoH's disarmament program (CNDDR). His story is demonstrative of the types of conditions in which the gangsters in Haiti's slums live. MINUSTAH's DDR section charged GRASI with assisting in the orientation and reinsertion program. The month-long program, lasting October 23 to November 21, 2006, was composed of young men from Cite Soleil ages 18 to 33. GRASI provided psychological assistance and counseling, psycho-social and economic profiling, and provided a detailed report on each participant. (See ref A for a description of the one-week orientation of the first class of participants.) GRASI also helped each participant identify, develop and put into action an individual 'reinsertion' project (PRI), usually in the field of micro-enterprise, transportation or manual labor. The program also included medical visits with Red Cross Haiti and education on citizenship, human rights, gender, non-violent communication, and the history of Haiti.

Why Join a Gang?

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16. (U) Almost half of the participants could not give a precise explanation of what led them to begin carrying weapons. Those who could point to the reason they joined a gang named poverty or family conflicts. About a quarter said they entered gang activity because they or their families had been attacked by the police or MINUSTAH, or to defend their neighborhood from those authorities. Other reasons for arming included a need to protect themselves from other gangs, peer pressure, and exhibitionism. When asked why they carried a weapon, 30 out of 53 stated that it was for self-defense.

Psychological Profile

17. (U) The GRASI report generalizes that the participants are psychologically immature, habitual delinquents encouraged by a criminal atmosphere. The ghetto of Cite Soleil is free of police control and thus an escape for youth who have committed crimes - a place where they can ensure their anonymity and take on aliases. They have never had any psychological or sociological treatment and are in need of ongoing psycho-social counseling.

Roles in the Gangs

18. (U) In terms of their functions within their gangs, almost 70 percent of the Santos IV class were common 'soldiers' and another 25 percent were lookouts or scouts. Only three were gang leaders. Their specific activities within the gangs included kidnapping, extortion and drug dealing. Almost all carried out their operations within Cite Soleil, but 10 also operated in other areas of Port-au-Prince. About half would obey their gang leader

'after reflection', a quarter would obey without thinking twice, and a quarter would dare to contradict or refuse their boss's orders. Several admitted that they are still 'blindly' following the orders of their gang leader even while participating in the DDR program.

Education History

¶9. (U) Forty percent of Santo IV had been through 'Secondary I' which is equivalent to grades 8 to 10 in the U.S. None had been to university. While 64 percent (34 people) entered school between the ages of 5 and 7, 15 percent (8 people) did not attend school until they were over 11. Almost all of the participants (80 percent) left school for economic reasons. Their most difficult subjects in school were mathematics and French.

Employment History

¶10. (U) Very few of the participants had any professional training, and most learned their trade on the job. The most common jobs were mechanic, mason, and chauffeur or delivery driver. Though they all purported to make significantly more money after joining a gang, most still had no savings to speak of. They justified this by saying they had never considered that they might not always have this 'job' as a source of income. Upon leaving the program, 56 percent expected to enter technical training, 28 percent expected to enter commerce, and 16 percent expected to go back to school. Almost every participant stated that they entered the program because it offered individual reintegration projects (PRI). Most were interested in becoming a mechanic, driver or micro-enterprise manager.

Drug and Alcohol Use

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¶11. (U) Most of these young men have a drug abuse problem. Fifty-six percent (30 people) regularly used marijuana and alcohol, and 20 percent (13 people) used hard drugs such as crack or cocaine. They use drugs to commit their crimes or simply because of peer pressure to prove they are part of the group. Ten men, or 20 percent, claimed to never use drugs.

Family Life

¶12. (U) The 53 participants had 78 biological children between them - approximately 1.5 children per participant. Some came from families as large as 20 siblings. More than half from a single-parent home and didn't know the whereabouts of their father. The men displayed a machismo mentality, asserting that 'Women are made to stay in the house.' The refrain of a popular song explains the basis for many young men's involvement with armed gangs: 'My Beretta at my side, my Galil under my back, I go down the airport road, I do a kidnapping. My woman is well dressed, my children eat well.'

Analysis of the Reintegration Program

¶13. (U) It is too early to make a prognosis about the success of the ROC program, according to the GRASI report. The report cites several specific problems that occurred during the one month orientation. At one point the participants rose up in protest against the program personnel, claiming

that CNDDR did not respect its promises to pay them each week and train them for a job. The program's sports directors complained they had a hard time waking up the participants in the morning. GRASI's psychologists and social workers lamented the difficulties of working with this population, and also said the directors of DDR berated them for not working hard enough.

¶14. (U) The experience led GRASI to make the following recommendations. Disarmament and dismantling of the gangs in Cite Soleil needs to be done section by section. Under the current system, the program draws low-level soldiers and scouts and not/not gang leaders. The overall disarmament movement is not large enough to prevent the graduates from reverting to the control of their gang boss as soon as they return home. The program cannot be successful if it does not include treatment for drug abuse and alcoholism. The CNDDR needs to keep its promise to provide financial assistance and job training to the participants. Most of all, there is a need for better coordination between the different actors, including GRASI, CNDDR and DDR-MINUSTAH.

¶15. (SBU) Comment: The report included several acerbic comments about CNDDR staff and reveals conflict between GRASI, CNDDR and the UN. Internal conflict in an already stressful situation clearly lessened the effectiveness of the program and sapped the motivation of the instructors. Very few gang leaders entered the program, which does little to solve the overarching problem of rampant gang activity in Port-au-Prince. Additionally, many participants admitted they would return to their illegal activities after completing the program. One month of orientation does not appear to convince the participants to fully denounce gang activity or to train them in a new profession.
SANDERSON